

## HAVE YOU WITNESSED A DISTURBANCE INCIDENT?



## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU WITNESS A DISTURBANCE INCIDENT?

Take notes of incidents that are as full as possible, describing the individuals who seem to commit violations, their craft, the animals' response, boat movements, the time and place, and names of witnesses. Photographs, films and videos of such events are invaluable.

Call a number on the card above as soon as possible.

## MANDATE OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA, Laurentian Region

**F**isheries and Oceans Canada is mandated to promote knowledge, conservation and the sustained and rational use of fishery resources for the benefit of present and future generations. More specifically, the Department is **responsible for ensuring the protection of marine mammals.**

With the aim of clarifying the regulations, a code of ethics for marine mammal watching has been drawn up in cooperation with industry members and Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park.



## REGULATIONS

**S**ection 7 of the Marine Mammal Regulations states that **"No person shall disturb a marine mammal"** in Canadian waters.

**The Marine Mammal Regulations apply to every type of commercial and recreational craft, including personal watercraft (Seadoos), kayaks and sailboats. They also cover individuals engaging in scuba diving and aircraft flying over the water surface.**

Under the *Fisheries Act*, any person who violates the Regulations is liable to prosecution.

Fishing licences for scientific and educational purposes may be issued in accordance with section 52 of the Fishery General Regulations. These licences are issued under certain conditions, allowing the use of working methods or approaches, such as biopsies and photo identification, not possible under normal observation conditions. Permit holders must fly the flag issued to them by the Department. Failure to comply with the conditions specified may result in prosecution.

## WATCH OUT FOR BELUGAS!

**T**HE ST LAWRENCE BELUGAS ARE AN ENDANGERED POPULATION. THIS IS WHY MEASURES ARE STRICT. THEY SHOULD **NEVER BE SOUGHT OUT FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBSERVING THEM.**

If you should come across some belugas in the St. Lawrence or the Saguenay river:

**AS SOON AS YOU CATCH SIGHT OF THE WHALES, SLOW DOWN TO LESS THAN FIVE KNOTS (actual bottom speed) WITHOUT SUDDENLY CHANGING SPEED OR DIRECTION.**

**DO NOT APPROACH THEM.**

**IF THE WHALES DO NOT MOVE AWAY**

**GO AROUND THEM SLOWLY, REMAINING AT A DISTANCE.**

**IF THE BELUGAS DO MOVE AWAY**

**MAINTAIN YOUR COURSE, AT REDUCED SPEED.**

**WAIT UNTIL THE WHALES ARE MORE THAN 400 m FROM YOUR VESSEL BEFORE GRADUALLY INCREASING SPEED.**

## DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THE LAND-BASED OBSERVATION SITES?

**T**here are several land-based marine mammal observation sites, some of which offer facilities and interpretation services. A number of them are located on the north shore, at Baie St Catherine, Tadoussac, Grandes Bergeronnes, Les Escoumins and Pointe des Monts, or in the Gaspésie, at Forillon and Percé. They are at strategic locations where the animals swim close to shore.

**Watching from landbase observation sites is fun and avoids the risk of disturbing the animals.**

For general information on the marine mammals, call the Communications Branch at (418) 648-7747.

For information on the regulations, call the Enforcement Branch at (418) 648-5888.

If you find an injured, beached or dead marine mammal, contact the Resource Management Branch at (418) 648-5885.

## There are limits TO OBSERVE!

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## CODE OF ETHICS

### DEFINITION

Set of rules intended to harmonize all marine mammal watching activities in accordance with existing regulations, while respecting the habitat and behaviour of these animals.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To prevent the disturbance of marine mammals in the Estuary and Gulf of St Lawrence with the aim of protecting and conserving this resource.
2. To exclude beluga whales from all marine mammal watching activities. The St Lawrence beluga is on the list of threatened species since 1983 (COSEWIC<sup>1</sup>) and is designated endangered.
3. To create a self-policing framework for all marine mammal observation excursions for recreational, commercial and scientific purposes.

Disturbing a marine mammal means pestering, bothering or frightening it or causing it distress through inappropriate approach or behaviour.

**Sudden changes in vessel speed** cause major variations in underwater sound waves, which can be a **source of stress for marine animals**<sup>2</sup>.

**Sudden changes in direction may stress** marine mammals since they may be unable to correctly determine the vessel's path<sup>3</sup>.

Stopping and starting marine engines may also be a stress factor. It is important to keep the engine in neutral near the marine mammals.

### RULES OF CONDUCT

**Never approach belugas.** (See "Watch out for belugas" on reverse).

Any abrupt approach to marine mammals, whether single or in pods, constitutes a kind of disturbance. Never make sudden changes in speed or direction within 400 metres of animals. Within 200 metres, do not shut off the engine, but let it in neutral.

Do not approach marine mammals at high speed. Approach obliquely rather than head on, from behind or at 90 degrees.

Do not encircle animals or allow more than five boats to gather near single marine mammals or pods. Boats should instead take turn to observe or scatter, according to the situation.

Do not approach resting animals.

### WHEN YOU ARE OUT IN A VESSEL AND WHALE WATCHING IS NOT YOUR PRIME OBJECTIVE:

Watch out for such animals.

If you encounter marine mammals, steer a course parallel to theirs at reduced speed.

Be sure to always have binoculars on board. You will be able to observe the animals better without disturbing them!

## HOW TO APPROACH A WHALE...

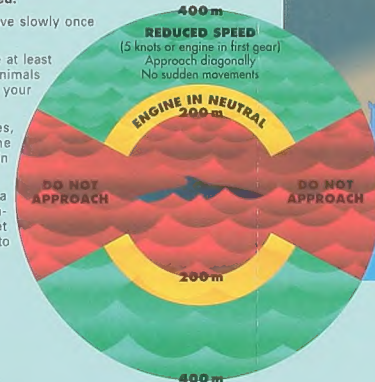
Do not make any sudden movement or change in speed.

Approach and leave slowly once the animals dive.

Wait until you are at least 400 m from the animals before increasing your speed **gradually**.

Within 200 metres, do not shut the engine, but let it in neutral.

Be passive, with a minimum of manoeuvring, and let the animals come to you.



### Table of equivalent distances

400 m	= 0,22 nautical mile	= 1248 feet
300 m	= 0,16 nautical mile	= 936 feet
200 m	= 0,11 nautical mile	= 624 feet

TO AVOID INTERFERING WITH THESE LAND-BASED OBSERVATION SITES, DO NOT TRAVEL WITHIN THESE ZONES:



RECOMMENDED  
GENERAL DISTANCES